

**Olmsted County Human Services Division
Community Services Advisory Board (CSAB)**

Wednesday, April 14th, 2021

Microsoft Teams

A. Call to order

Chair Brandt called to order the Community Services Advisory Board (CSAB) meeting at 7:30 a.m.

Members Present

Susan Ahlquist, Melissa Brandt, Samantha Duke, Emily Johnston, Patrick Keane, Kelly Kirkpatrick, Commissioner Sheila Kiscaden, Jinglin Li, Arhan Mehta, JoMarie Morris, Laurel Podulke-Smith, Eric Smith, Deborah Trahan, Shirley Westbrook, Chad Wojchik, Commissioner Gregg Wright.

Members Absent

Courtney Lawson.

Staff Present

Dave Dunn, Corrine Erickson, Mary Eichten, Trent Fluegel, Jenna Gilbertson, Travis Gransee, Julie Hatch, Sarah Oachs, Diane Paradise, Nathan Pike, Bea SanMiguel-Molina, Amy Rauchwarter, Amy Thompson.

Staff Absent

None.

Guests

None.

B. Agenda Changes for Regular Meeting

None.

C. Approval of minutes from the last meeting

A was made and seconded to approve the March 10th, 2021, meeting minutes. Motion carried.

D. Chair Announcements

Chair Brandt shared a PowerPoint slide on Trauma and Recovery based on the website called unconditionallearning.org and reminded members of the board training. Samantha Duke introduced herself to the CSAB. Vacant position on CSAB: two member at large and one consumer.

Human Services Staff Q & A

Travis Gransee introduced himself to CSAB and said he is excited and honored to take on the new role of deputy administrator. He will continue to support the current leadership team. He considers himself a public servant with a passion for equity. He will carry that mindset into his new role.

Corrine Erickson said due to the pandemic recipients of MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Program) and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) were not required to renew their eligibility, but starting in June people will have to recertify their eligibility status. People can recertify either online or by mail.

Nate Pike said the COVID-19 Disaster Relief Grant offered by the MN Department of Veteran Affairs will expire tonight. The state received federal funding for the construction of veteran housing in Preston, Montevideo, and Bemidji, but he is unsure when those will break ground.

County Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Gregg Wright said the commissioners will begin discussions on the funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. Olmsted County will receive a onetime amount of about \$30 million.

Commissioner Sheila Kiscaden said Olmsted County received funding for a data equity project from an organization called Evident Change. The funding will be used to train an internal team on how to use data to evaluate equity and they will implement their learnings with pre-trial diversion program. The county has also applied for another grant that will help children of incarcerated families. Also, the disparity issues involving black men dying at the hands of law enforcement can't be examined without identifying the structural issues around racism. There is a joint task force with the Human Rights Commission and Olmsted County Public Health to look at structural racism as a public health issue. She also shared two links: [How the Deck is Stacked: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Earnings Following High School Graduation in Minnesota from the DEED \(Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development\)](#), and [BlueCross BlueShield: Racism is a health crisis](#).

Board Member Dialogue

Eric Smith asked if the funding from the American Rescue Plan Act going to be used for affordable housing. Commissioner Kiscaden said the prospect is to possibly collaborate with the City of Rochester on this issue.

Laurel Podulke-Smith initiated a brief discussion on using the terms affordable housing and low income housing.

Susan Ahlquist ask if at a future meeting the board could evaluate what role Human Services Advisory Board could take on understanding or contributing to the work of racism as a public health issue.

Youth Announcements

Jinglin Li said Living Room Tutors has served over 200 children and is going well. The virtual tutoring will continue even though students are returning to in-person learning

and post pandemic. They are continuing to explore ways to promote the program and expand the program. For example, getting the tutors a certificate through Winona State University.

Arhan Mehta said they described the role of Rochester-Olmsted County Youth Commission. They are partnering with OutFront Minnesota, which is an organization for LGBTQ individuals, and Senator David Senjem to make some progress on the conversion therapy bill in the Senate.

E. Decision Item

Human Services Advisory Board Bylaws Approval – Chair Brandt & Sarah Oachs

Emily Johnson said the United Way of Olmsted County would like to be removed from having a standing member serve on the CSAB. Members discussed whether this slot would be replaced as a member-at-large or a consumer. Since the consumer position has been challenging to fill, the board decided to replace the United Way's seat as a member-at-large to give more flexibility. It was also suggested to make all the seats member-at-large positions, so we don't single out people. If memberships were to switch to all members-at-large, the recruitment process would have to be more intentional to include people who better represent our community. Emily suggested that the intent for the board to have a diverse, equitable, and inclusive membership should also be recorded in the bylaws. There also needs to be a shared understanding of the purpose of CSAB. Sarah reminded the group that portions of the bylaws are standard for all advisory boards set by the county board and county attorney's office. Not having approved bylaws doesn't hinder CSAB's ability to move forward. Traditionally the bylaws are reviewed yearly, so the bylaws will continue to evolve. A workgroup will convene to make additional recommendations to the language of the bylaws and return with their suggestions. A motion was made to keep and adopt the current version of the bylaws with the intent to hear from the workgroup's recommendations in the coming months in preparation for next year's bylaws review. Motion carried.

F. Informational Items

1. CSAB Workgroup Update – Chair Brandt

Chair Brandt said a few members met to discuss the role of CSAB; these were some of the questions and concerns. What opportunities does CSAB have to provide insight to the community, county, and staff; where does our voice go, and what is our role? Why are we necessary? How do we have appropriate representation of the board? We need to improve the recruitment process rather than fill open seats. What is the potential of the Community Needs Assessment model? The role of CSAB to advise the county board and be a voice of service for the community. Our feedback goes to both staff and commissioners from a community perspective. The element of public

feedback is missing, and the workgroup will report next month with a goal of renewed focus. Commissioner Kiscaden has asked this group to give a voice to the disparities of service in the community. If the CSAB were to move towards open forums or town hall meetings, Chair Brandt cautioned how public suggestions are handled because the CSAB may not be able to change some of the demand or requests. We would have to prepare for the response. Members are looking forward to the next steps. Commissioner Kiscaden responded to a question about governance and service delivery. She said Minnesota is one of 11 states with a county-administered social services system according to state and federal requirements. There is some flexibility, but we cannot develop a system from the ground up as a county. Shirley Westbrook suggested that CSAB should focus on what the board can change and where this group can make the most impact.

2. Maxfield Study Update – Dave Dunn

This item was tabled for next month.

G. Adjournment

Chair Brandt adjourned the meeting at 9:02 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Bea SanMiguel-Molina.